

# Massachusetts Weed Watchers

## Non-native Aquatic Species Monitoring Program

### Department of Conservation & Recreation Lakes and Ponds Program



*By monitoring your lake or pond you are taking an active role in ensuring the protection of your lake for the future!*

### Program Description

A key goal of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Lakes and Ponds Program is to prevent further infestation of Massachusetts's lakes and ponds by exotic invasive aquatic plants, and to work toward controlling and removing existing populations of exotic invasive plants. To meet this goal, we have developed a program to train local lake groups to monitor their ponds for the presence of exotic invasive species and to develop a removal plan if an infestation is found. If a pioneer infestation of invasive exotic species is identified early, there is a greater chance that the plant can be eradicated before it becomes established in the lake or pond. Once invasive species are established they are almost impossible to remove and very expensive to control. Invasive species spread rapidly and form dense mats that can make boating, fishing and swimming impossible. As the recreational and aesthetic value of the lake declines, property values around the lake also decrease.

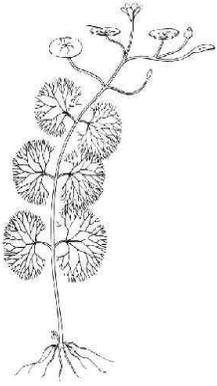


### Class Description

Each spring and summer the Lakes and Ponds Program schedules Weed Watcher training for any interested lake groups or associations. The 2 hour class begins with an introduction to the non-native species issue, how exotic species are introduced into our waterways, methods of dispersal, basic terminology, and guidance on performing bi-weekly monitoring and completing plant surveys. The remaining 3/4 of the class will engage volunteers in hands-on identification. A variety of non-native and native plant species are provided, and people are encouraged to bring in their own samples. Volunteers will become familiar with using a dichotomous key and, although the emphasis is on exotic species, the goal is to teach volunteers to understand how to *use* the key so that they will be able to identify the majority of common aquatic plants in their lake or pond (native or otherwise).



The group will receive a Weed Watcher Packet that contains: reporting forms, Standard Operating Procedures (for Hand Pulling and Benthic Barriers), A Guide to Aquatic Plants in Massachusetts (Aquarium Guide), Guide to Selected Invasive Non-native Plants in Massachusetts, Massachusetts Lake & Pond Guide, Invasive Species brochure and poster, boat ramp signs, and other useful information. The Lakes and Ponds Program requests that the participating groups complete and return the reporting forms each summer, so that the aquatic invasive exotic species data base can be updated.



## Massachusetts Weed Watchers 2007 Sign Up Form



Name (main contact person): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (day): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Lake or pond name \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of lake association (if any)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of expected volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Average experience of volunteers with aquatic plant identification and/or water monitoring?  A lot  Some  None
6. Does your town support a plant monitoring program? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Names of other lakes/ponds that you might be monitoring?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and return this form to:

Michelle Robinson  
Lakes and Ponds Program  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
180 Beaman St. West Boylston, MA 01583  
Fax: 508-835-6018

*If you have questions regarding the MA Weed Watcher Program contact [Michelle.Robinson@state.ma.us](mailto:Michelle.Robinson@state.ma.us) or visit [www.mass.gov/lakesandponds](http://www.mass.gov/lakesandponds)*

*If you have not yet formed a lake association and are interested in forming one, contact the Congress of Lakes and Ponds (COLAP) [www.colap.com](http://www.colap.com)*

